Happy Birthday Copernicus

On February 19, Nicolaus Copernicus' birthday, IUPAC released the official approval of the name copernicium, with symbol Cn, for the element of atomic number 112. Priority for the discovery of this element was assigned, in accordance with the agreed criteria, to the Gesellschaft für Schwerionenforschung (GSI) (Center for Heavy Ion Research) in Darmstadt, Germany. The team at GSI proposed the name copernicium, and IUPAC has now approved this after a period of review of public comments. Sigurd Hofmann, leader of the GSI team, stated that the intent was to "salute an influential scientist who didn't receive any accolades in his own lifetime, and highlight the link between astronomy and the field of nuclear chemistry."

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543).

The name proposed by the GSI lies within the long tradition of naming elements to honor famous scientists. Nicolaus Copernicus was born on 19 February 1473, in Torún, Poland and died on 24 May 1543, in Frombork/Frauenburg, also in Poland. His work has been of exceptional influence on the philosophical and political thinking of mankind and on the rise of modern science based on experimental results. During his time as a canon of the Cathedral in Frauenburg, Copernicus spent many years developing a conclusive model for complex astronomical observations of the movements of the sun, moon, planets, and stars. His work published as *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium, Liber Sixtus* in 1543 had very far reaching consequences. Indeed, the Copernican model demanded major changes in the view of the world related to astronomy and physical forces, and it had theological and political consequences. The planetary system introduced by Copernicus has been applied to other analogous systems in which objects move under the influence of a force directed towards a common center. Notably, on a microscopic scale this is the Bohr model of the atom with its nucleus and orbiting electrons.

The Recommendations are published in the March 2010 issue of the IUPAC journal *Pure and Applied Chemistry* (doi:10.1351/PAC-REC-09-08-20). Priority of claims to the discovery of the element of atomic number 112 was determined by a joint working party of independent experts drawn from IUPAC and the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics. The group's report was published in July 2009 (*PAC*, Vol. 81, No. 7, pp. 1331-1343; doi:10.1351/PAC-REP-08-03-05). The Joint Working Party will issue a second report, dealing with claims for the discovery of elements with atomic numbers in the range 113 to 118, in the near future.

Terrence Renner Appointed IUPAC Executive Director

On 1 February 2010, Dr. Terrence A. Renner became the new executive director of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. Renner succeeds Dr. John W. Jost who headed the Secretariat for almost 13 years since its move to Research Triangle Park (RTP), North Carolina, from Oxford, UK, in 1997.

Renner comes to the IUPAC post from NanoInk, Inc., where he was director of applied science. He obtained his B.S. degree in chemistry at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. Thereafter, as a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow, he completed his Ph.D. in physical chemistry at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, as a student of Philip A. Lyons. Renner's working career has encompassed the fields of nuclear, environmental, physical, organic, surface, materials, process, and petroleum chemistry. More recently, in the realm of nanotechnology, his experience expanded to include the interface of chemistry with biology, biochemistry, and pharmaceutical chemistry at the nanoscale. Renner is an accomplished executive who understands the importance and relevance of both pure and applied science within the practical context of business and product development. He has represented companies globally in discussions and negotiations with academics, business leaders, and government officials at all levels to attain mutually beneficial objectives.

IUPAC Past President Jung-Il Jin pointed out that Renner's appointment comes as the Union prepares for the International Year of Chemistry in 2011. Jin expects that Renner will play a major role as IUPAC leads the world chemical community into the International Year of Chemistry.